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Lake Views

MWCD Plays a Vital Role in Eastern Ohio's Economy

By Pete Novotny, Chief of Recreation

MWCD is dedicated to improving the region and driving economic growth through strategic investments that enhance recreation, infrastructure, and the communities that call Eastern Ohio home. In 2023, a Cleveland State University study found that these investments over the past decade have resulted in an economic impact on the region of \$1 billion. This milestone underscores MWCD's vital role as an economic driver and its commitment to enhancing the quality of life throughout the Muskingum River Watershed.

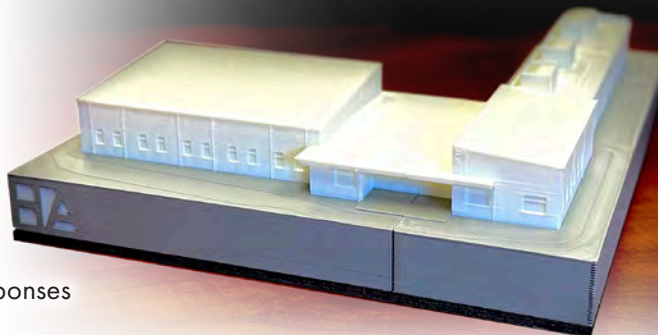
Two current projects demonstrate MWCD's continued dedication to strengthening local communities and fostering long-term growth across the region: the Tappan Regional Safety Center and the Charles Mill Marina Houseboat Path.

Tappan Regional Safety Center Project

MWCD has recently begun construction on the new Tappan Regional Safety Center, which will serve as both a modern Ranger Training Center and the headquarters of the Tappan Lake Volunteer Fire Department. This \$4.6 million facility marks a significant improvement for first responders in Eastern Ohio. For years, many local law enforcement agencies have relied on outdoor spaces or makeshift settings for training due to a lack of regional facilities. The new center will address this issue by providing dedicated classrooms and an indoor gun range for skill development, supporting the high-quality training needed for the region's safety forces.

The timing of this project is critical. Ohio has increased the annual continuing education requirements for all peace officers in the state, with a focus on topics such as de-escalation, legal updates, community engagement, and scenario-based instruction. By offering a local facility designed for this training, the center will help agencies meet these standards more effectively while also strengthening community policing throughout the region. Additionally, the new space will enhance the operational and training capabilities of the Tappan Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

The center will feature a helicopter landing zone to facilitate quicker medical responses and coordinated emergency operations around Tappan Lake. With an expected completion date in 2026, the new regional hub will improve safety, preparedness, and service for all residents and visitors to the Muskingum Watershed.



Architectural model of the new Tappan Regional Safety Center



MWCD Helps to Preserve Broughton Legacy

MWCD has announced the purchase of the Broughton Nature and Wildlife Area, securing the Broughton family's legacy of commitment to conservation and community. The acquisition ensures the land will remain publicly accessible and carefully stewarded, supported both by MWCD's ongoing investment in operations and a dedicated fund established through the Broughton Foundation's contribution to the Marietta Community Foundation.

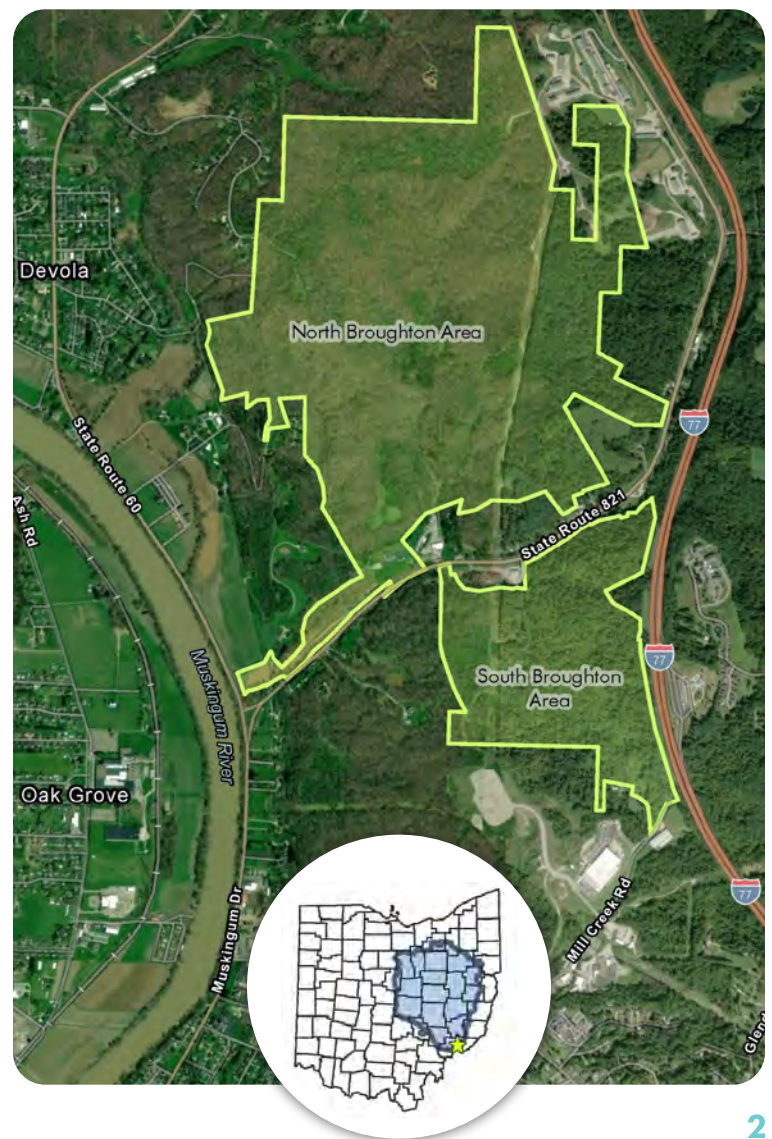
"Our family has been proud to share the Broughton Nature and Wildlife Area with the public over the years," said George Broughton. "This partnership with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District ensures that future generations will continue to enjoy and benefit from this special place. Through the Broughton Foundation's investment in the Marietta Community Foundation, we are helping to secure long-term stewardship of the land, while enhancing public access and preserving its natural beauty for years to come."

"On behalf of the MWCD Board of Directors, I am excited to celebrate the acquisition of the Broughton property, an extraordinary addition to the conservancy district," said Karl Gebhardt, MWCD Board President. "This land represents not just acreage, but opportunity for continued recreation, conservation, and community connection. As our first major landholding in the southern part of the Watershed, it reflects our ongoing commitment to preserving natural resources and providing places where families can explore, learn, and grow together."

For decades, the Broughton family has played a vital role in shaping the Mid-Ohio Valley, preserving open spaces, fostering educational opportunities, and enriching the community. Carl Broughton, a founding visionary of the Marietta Community Foundation, established a tradition of philanthropy and conservation that continues today.

"This partnership is about more than land, it's about legacy," said Heather Allender, President and CEO of Marietta Community Foundation. "The Broughton family, MWCD, and the Foundation each bring unique strengths to this effort. Together, we are ensuring this park remains a place where people can learn, explore, and be inspired by nature."

The Broughton Nature and Wildlife Area will remain open to the public, providing a space for outdoor recreation, education, and the enjoyment of nature. The collaboration underscores a shared commitment to ensuring this treasured wildlife area and community resource continues to thrive for generations to come.





MWCD and USACE Partnership Has Impact Beyond Flood Protection

For more than 90 years, MWCD and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have shared a powerful partnership rooted in protecting lives and property from flooding across Eastern Ohio. What began as a collaboration born from tragedy has grown into a dynamic relationship that continues to evolve and strengthen through shared expertise, innovation, and leadership.

The Great Flood of 1913, Ohio's greatest natural disaster, claimed nearly 500 lives, destroyed 69 bridges, and caused more than \$300 million in damage. From that tragedy emerged a commitment to protect the Muskingum River Watershed and its communities. MWCD was formed in 1933, and a long-term partnership with the USACE began soon after.

Today, that partnership remains a cornerstone of flood protection in the region. The USACE owns and operates the 16 dams in the Muskingum River Basin, while MWCD cost-shares major dam safety modifications and owns and operates the lakes and lands that provide recreational opportunities, safeguard natural resources, promote conservation, and enhance the quality of life throughout the Watershed.

Floods remain the deadliest weather disaster in the United States, claiming more lives each year than hurricanes or tornadoes. That reality drives both agencies to continue advancing flood mitigation through engineering, water resource management, and a shared commitment to community safety. Yet both MWCD and USACE understand that success requires more than technical expertise, it requires collaboration at every level.

While the partnership's roots are in flood prevention, its branches reach far beyond. Together, MWCD and USACE engage local organizations, leaders, and residents to strengthen community preparedness, support environmental stewardship, and expand recreation and conservation opportunities. These local partnerships bring invaluable on-the-ground knowledge, foster public engagement, and combine resources to maximize proving that the most effective responses to natural challenges are born through cooperation.

The MWCD-USACE partnership also provides opportunities for professional growth and leadership development. MWCD staff members have had the opportunity to participate in the USACE Leadership Development Program (LDP), a rigorous, hands-on course designed to build stronger leaders and more effective teams.



Above: Col. Phil Valenti, USACE Huntington District Commander and Craig Butler



Left: Doug Little and Col. Jayson Putnam, former USACE Huntington District Commander



Right: Dave Lautenschleger, Jeff Yohe, Col. Phil Valenti, USACE Huntington District Commander, and Pete Novotny

Two of MWCD's leaders have proudly completed this prestigious program:

- Doug Little, MWCD Deputy Chief of Reservoir Management and Infrastructure, Class of 2022.
- Jeff Yohe, MWCD Deputy Chief of Facilities, Class of 2025

The lessons from the LDP program directly support MWCD's mission of enhancing teamwork, leadership, and partnership skills that translate into better-managed projects and stronger community outcomes.

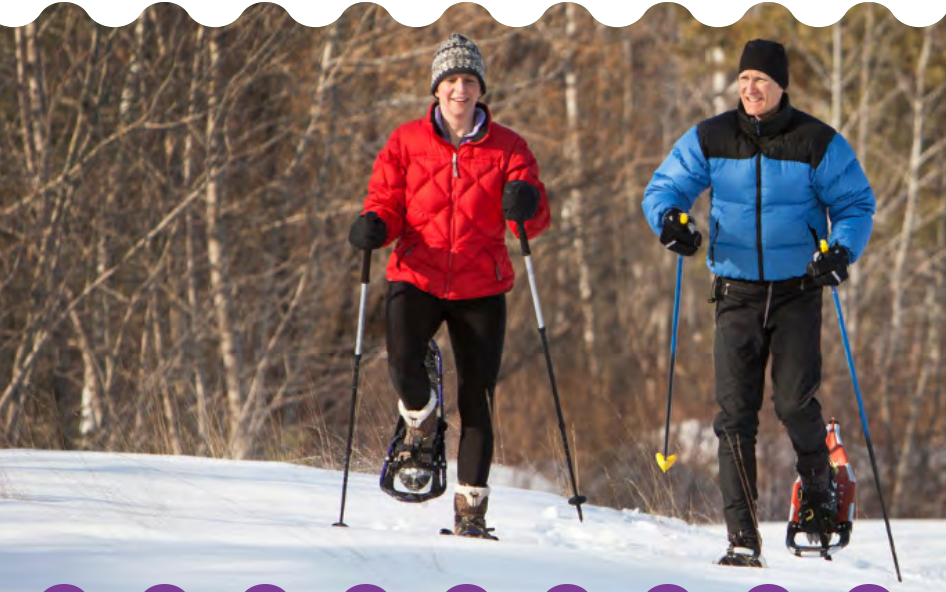
Both MWCD and USACE understand that no single organization or leader can shoulder the complex task of protecting lives, property, and environmental stewardship alone. It takes coordinated effort, continuous learning, and a shared commitment to excellence.

As we look to the future, MWCD and USACE remain dedicated to facing challenges and working together, continuing the legacy of collaboration that has safeguarded Eastern Ohio for nearly a century. Whether through flood mitigation, environmental conservation, recreation, or leadership development, our partnership stands as a model for how working together makes our communities stronger, safer, and more resilient.

Winter Fun at MWCD Lakes

MWCD Lakes are perfect locations for winter activities including cross-country skiing, ice fishing, hiking, and snowshoeing.

Some programs require pre-registration.
See full program schedule and details at
www.MWCD.org/events



Snowshoeing Popup Hikes

Try snowshoeing at one of our pop-up snowshoe hikes and rentals. Snowshoeing is a great workout and easy to learn. Since snowshoeing is dependent on the snow, we will host pop-up snowshoe programs when a lake receives at least 3" of snowfall. Pop-up program locations and times will be posted on our Facebook pages, so be sure to follow your favorite lake or follow MWCD's page for all location announcements.

Winter Solstice Hike

Mark your calendars for the Winter Solstice hike at Atwood Lake Park on Sunday, December 21. This popular hike celebrates the Winter Solstice and the beginning of more sunlight! Take a self-guided hike along the Woodland Trail and bridge by the light of many luminaries and candles. Then enjoy hot chocolate, s'mores, and a fun Christmas craft at the Activity Center. The luminaries will be lit, and refreshments will be available between 6 pm and 8 pm. Parking is available at the Activity Center, and the hike will be up to two miles long. As a self-guided tour, you can make it your own and go farther or turn around sooner, if needed.



Souper Hike

Chase away the winter blues with the Souper Hike at Tappan Lake on January 24. Enjoy a refreshing hike along scenic trails, then warm up with a cup of soup at the finish. Bring your friends and family for a day of adventure, connection, and delicious comfort in the great outdoors.

Cozy Puzzle Challenge

Warm up this winter with the Cozy Puzzle Challenge at Atwood Lake Park on March 21. Grab your team of four and compete in a fun, family-friendly jigsaw puzzle competition with prizes! Registration required at www.MWCD.org/tickets.



MWCD's Economic Role Cont.

Charles Mill Marina Houseboat Path Renovation Project

MWCD is investing \$1.1 million in the Charles Mill Marina Houseboat Path Access project, which will significantly enhance the houseboat experience at one of Ohio's most cherished inland lakes. The project includes over 1,500 feet of shoreline stabilization, new concrete paving, and improved grading to create a smooth, continuous elevation. These upgrades will make accessing houseboats safer, easier, and more enjoyable throughout the boating season.

The improvements also involve replacing 21 aging dock abutments, adding new water service at several abutments, and upgrading the lighting and electrical systems with new power hook-ups at each abutment. Additional enhancements include upgraded stairway access, expanded parking through the regrading of the storage lot, and environmental improvements such as removing low-growth brush and planting native species along the hillside. These upgrades ensure that both long-time boaters and new visitors will enjoy a more comfortable and reliable experience at the marina.



As Andrew Schraedly, co-owner of Charles Mill Marina, noted, the revitalization project represents "an important investment in the long-term vitality" of Ohio's largest inland houseboat community. With construction underway, this project reflects a shared commitment to preserving access, strengthening infrastructure, and delivering one of the best on-the-water experiences in the region.

Project Momentum Continues

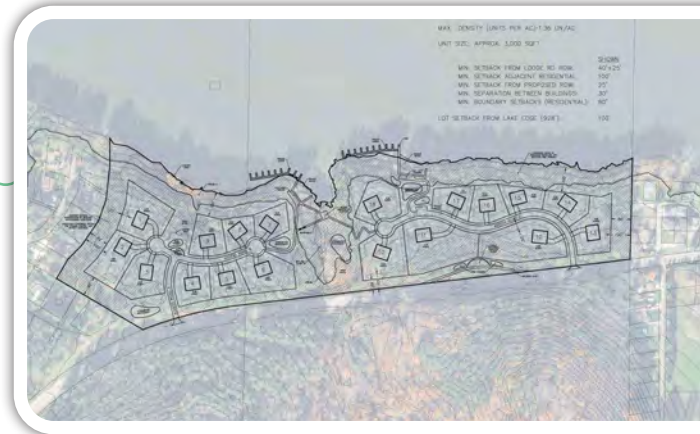
By Dave Lautenschleger, Chief of Engineering

New Atwood Lake Development Features 18 Cottage Sites

A new cottage site at Atwood Lake is being developed along Lodge Road SW (S.R. 542). The proposed project features 18 premium lots, thoughtfully arranged into two distinct areas, each with its own private access drive for a more secluded residential feel.

Each site in the development will offer direct access or view of Atwood Lake, including two cluster docks with each unit guaranteed two boat slips. The design also includes two golf cart parking lots situated near the docks, as well as exclusive private beach access for cottage owners.

Engineering and design efforts include a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship. The project will incorporate Best Management Practices to protect water quality, manage stormwater, and preserve the natural character of the shoreline. Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2026, with lot release planned for July 2026. The method for offering the lots is still under consideration.



New MWCD Headquarters on Schedule

MWCD is progressing on schedule toward completion of its new headquarters in New Philadelphia. The project broke ground in March 2025, and in September, MWCD staff alongside contractors, community partners and leaders, participated in a Topping Out ceremony, a significant milestone, memorializing the structural completion of the building. Completion of the new facility is expected in fall 2026 and represents a major investment in collaboration, sustainability, and community connection.





MWCD Projects Cont.

The 34,000 sq. ft. facility will bring together staff from administration, engineering, recreation, natural resources, legal, and marketing teams that are currently housed in three separate buildings. Consolidating operations under one roof will foster stronger teamwork and streamline daily operations, while also offering a modern workplace designed for flexibility and efficiency.

The headquarters will feature a large meeting space capable of hosting up to 125 people, bringing new opportunities for community engagement and public programming.

A second, 8,000 sq. ft. building on the campus will house essential support functions, including a service garage, a water lab, and sign shop, ensuring that field operations remain well-equipped.

The project also emphasizes outdoor recreation and sustainability. New and expanded trail connections will link the headquarters to Kent State University Tuscarawas and the Buckeye Career Center, while planned amenities such as a dog park, solar panels, and EV charging stations highlight MWCD's commitment to environmental stewardship and community-friendly spaces.

As construction moves forward, the headquarters stands as a symbol of MWCD's long-term mission—strengthening operations, enhancing public access, and deepening its roots in the region it serves.

Excavation and Dredging Planned for Piedmont Lake

A significant excavation and dredging initiative is scheduled to take place during the 2025 winter drawdown at Piedmont Lake, targeting three areas where sediment buildup has increasingly hindered boating access. The project focuses on improving water depth for boaters especially when launching and retrieving boats.

In addition to dredging, the project will address substantial sediment deposits at the mouths of the streams flowing into several bays. One of the most impacted areas is the bay upstream of the Essex Cove, where roughly two acres have filled in with sediment

Progress on the new MWCD Headquarters

over time. This accumulation has played a major role in restricting water depth and usable boating space.

Across the three targeted zones, crews are expected to remove an estimated 12,750 cubic yards of material. Upon completion, the dredging is projected to increase water depth by approximately two feet, providing safer and more reliable access for boating activities.

The total estimated construction cost for the project is \$820,000, reflecting the scale of sediment removal required to restore these waterways. The dredging effort represents a proactive step in maintaining navigability, supporting recreational use, and ensuring that Piedmont Lake remains accessible for the many boaters who rely on its dock facilities year after year.

Major Enhancements Coming to Pleasant Hill Lake Park

Pleasant Hill Lake Park is moving forward with a major enhancement to its waterfront experience, as final designs have been completed for a new amenity area located between the existing restroom building and the beach. The project aims to elevate recreation opportunities and improve visitor flow throughout the park.

The new beachfront zone will feature two volleyball courts, a tetherball court, a small water spray play area, a restroom and changing facility, a kayak launch, expanded parking, sidewalks, steps, and multiple seating areas. These additions will create a more vibrant and accessible recreational hub. Pedestrian access will also be significantly improved, providing smoother connections between the beach, the amenity area, and the existing Welcome and Activity Center. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2026.

Atwood Lake Park Beach Amenities Improvements Coming

Plans to enhance visitor experiences at Atwood Lake Park are underway as designs are being finalized for new beach amenities. The proposed design will guide the transformation of the Atwood Lake Park Beach area. Planned improvements



New restroom/showerhouse and playground at Charles Mill Lake Park Beach

include replacing the existing restroom and changing facilities, renovating the concession building, installing a new splash pad, updating the playground, adding shade sails, expanding walking paths, and creating a designated dog beach. Together, these upgrades aim to modernize the area, expand recreational opportunities, and improve comfort and accessibility for guests.

Pleasant Hill Lake Park Plans for Redevelopment Efforts

Plans for a significant redevelopment effort at Pleasant Hill Lake Park are moving forward as designs have been finalized for upgrades to the Area E campground and the replacement of Loop Road. The project represents a major investment in modernizing infrastructure and enhancing visitor experience.

The redesigned Area E campground will feature 101 full hook-up RV sites, each equipped with concrete pads to improve durability and accessibility. A new family-style shower house and restroom facility will further elevate comfort and convenience for campers. Additionally, improvements to boat ramp parking and traffic flow are included in the project, addressing long-standing congestion issues during peak seasons.

A key component of the redevelopment is the replacement and widening of Loop Road, stretching from the horse camp to Area E. The upgraded roadway will include a designated bike lane, promoting safer and more enjoyable movement throughout the park.

Charles Mill Lake Park Beach Peninsula Project Takes Shape

Improvements to the campground and public amenities are currently underway.



Thirty new RV sites are being added with concrete pads, electrical, water and sanitary sewer hookups. New facilities being constructed include a new restroom/shower house and a new picnic shelter, and the existing restroom/concession building near the beach is undergoing renovations. New amenities include a playground and sport courts near the beach area, as well as an ADA fishing pier, shade sails, and a concrete pad with utility hook-ups for food trucks near the beach. Estimated completion is summer 2026.

Two Significant Clendening Lake Park Projects Underway

Clendening Lake Park is moving forward with two significant improvement projects – the new Marina Building and the addition of three new cabins. Together, these upgrades mark a substantial investment in enhancing visitor services and modernizing park infrastructure.

The new Marina Building will be a more functional and guest-friendly space. The building will feature updated retail space, office areas, a meeting room, laundry facilities, expanded storage, a backup generator, and an ADA-accessible restroom. Site improvements will include a new access roadway, upgraded parking areas, and enhanced landscaping to improve the overall appearance and flow of the marina complex.

In addition to the marina improvements, designs have been finalized for the addition of three new cabins at Clendening Lake Park. This project will complete the development of the park’s cabin area, providing high-quality accommodations for visitors. Planned sitework includes new roadway surfacing and landscaping to integrate the cabins seamlessly into the existing layout. Construction is underway.

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Lake Views

NEED A SPEAKER FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT?

Is your civic, social, or community group looking for speakers for upcoming meetings? How about providing information for a discussion about the MWCD or any of its many programs?

MWCD can provide the details by supplying a speaker and presentation for those in attendance.

For details, topics, or to book a date, contact Ethan Zucal at MWCD at (330) 556-4814 or by emailing at ezucal@mwcd.org.

